

House and Senate GOP Struggle with Deep Divisions Over Their Budget

This week, Speaker Ryan continues to struggle with deep divisions in his party over a path forward on a budget resolution for Fiscal Year 2017. Republicans agreed to last year's budget deal, and they ought to stick with the spending levels they voted for – and paid for – in October. Instead, they are now looking to reopen the agreement with a standalone package of additional mandatory spending cuts that would harm working families. Among other proposals, the package would:

- **Eliminate the Prevention and Public Health Fund**
- **Cut Medicaid**
- **Deny the Child Tax Credit to U.S. citizen children of immigrant parents**

Despite these harmful spending cuts, conservatives are still expressing opposition to the GOP budget:

“Prospects for a fiscal 2017 budget road map remained dicey as conservative Republicans expressed opposition and Democrats howled over proposed cuts to entitlement programs. The double-barreled setbacks foreshadow a tough week for House Budget Chairman Tom Price, R-Ga... But with conservatives protesting the higher spending limits, plenty of doubts remain — even among GOP members of Price's committee... ‘I'm moving toward a “no” by the day,’ said Rep. Dave Brat, R-Va., another Freedom Caucus member of the committee.” [CQ, [3/14/16](#)]

“In the House, GOP leaders are struggling to break a months-long impasse over passing a new budget, a top priority this year for new [House] Speaker Paul Ryan [R-WI]. There's been no significant progress in forging a spending plan that passes conservative muster, even as senior Republicans spent a week-long recess fielding proposals and ideas from lawmakers.” [Politico, [3/14/16](#)]

“House Republicans are running out of time to adopt a budget and their leaders plan to make a major push this week to rally members behind a spending plan... House Speaker Paul D. Ryan (R-Wisc.) has been working for weeks with House Budget Committee Chairman Tom Price (R-Ga.) to convince hardline conservatives to back a budget that includes \$30 billion in new spending agreed to last year as part of a bipartisan deal... Ryan has made passing all 12 annual appropriations bills a key goal for the year... In order to do that, the House will have to approve a budget resolution, which lays the groundwork for the year's spending and tax policy work, including the \$30 billion in extra funding Republican and Democratic leaders agree to last year. Otherwise the annual spending bills have little chance of getting through the Senate, all but ensuring a battle later this election year over how to keep the government funded.” [Washington Post, [3/14/16](#)]

While Republicans in the House struggle to find a path forward, Senate Republicans have decided to delay consideration of their budget:

“Republicans on the Senate Budget Committee said Monday they would delay consideration of a budget this month... The move comes as Republicans in the House are laboring to come to a consensus on a budget, and boosts the odds that one or both chambers will skip doing a budget altogether this year. That would be an embarrassing outcome for GOP leaders who pledged to write a budget and return Congress to a functioning institution.” [Politico, [3/7/16](#)]

And Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell made clear the Senate would stick to last year's budget agreement, no matter what the House does:

“‘We'll be using the topline that was agreed to last year in order to move forward on the Senate appropriations,’ McConnell said Tuesday, referring to the \$1.070 trillion budget number that Republicans and Democrats agreed to in October.” [Huffington Post, [3/8/16](#)]